

*****Media Advisory*****

Wilson Celebrates Service

Wilson to Help Pack and Distribute Groceries for the Needy with Senior Volunteers

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) will tour and volunteer at a local food pantry to help bring awareness to both the importance of service by seniors and to the recently enacted law, the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act.

“Service to country and service to community is one of the most important things we have to give,” Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) said.

WHO: Congressman Charlie Wilson

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Volunteers of Washington County

WHAT: Food pantry tour and media availability to discuss new law, the Serve Act and importance of community service

WHERE: Marietta Food Pantry

318 Front Street

Marietta, OH 45750

WHEN: Thursday, May 28, 2009 at 10 a.m.

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Background on the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act

Specifically, the legislation:

Creates 175,000 New Service Opportunities and Rewards Americans for Commitment

- Grows the number of volunteers nationwide to 250,000, up from 75,000. These new service opportunities will include the expansion of existing service programs, like AmeriCorps, as well as four new service corps focused on education, health care, energy and veterans. All service programs established under the bill will be overseen by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

- Increases the full-time education award service members receive in exchange for their work to \$5,350 for 2010. This award would also be linked to match future increases in the Pell Grant scholarship in order to keep up with rising college costs.

Creates New Service Corps to Meet Key Needs in Low-Income Communities

- Establishes four new service corps to address key needs in low income communities, including a Clean Energy Corps to encourage energy efficiency and conservation, an Education Corps to help increase student engagement, achievement and graduation, a Healthy Futures Corps to improve health care access, and a Veterans Service Corps to enhance services for veterans.

Provides Incentives for Middle and High School Students to Engage in Service

- Establishes the Summer of Service program that engages middle and high school students in volunteer activities in their communities and allows them to earn a \$500 education award to be used for college costs. Students will be eligible to participate in two terms of service and earn up to a total of \$1,000.

Makes High School Students Part of Solution to Challenges in their Communities

- Establishes Youth Engagement Zones, a new service-learning program to engage low-income high school students and out-of-school youth in volunteer efforts that address challenges in their local communities. The program will encourage partnerships between community-based organizations and schools in high-need communities and apply real world activities to teach students about a certain topic. For example, volunteering in a homeless shelter could supplement a class about poverty.

Boosts Opportunities for Disadvantaged and Foster Youth and Native Americans

- Expands opportunities for disadvantaged youth, including doubling the resources available to engage youth with disabilities, to become more involved with service and offers people of all ages and those from diverse backgrounds introduction to service.
- Encourages adults to serve as mentors for foster youth.
- Establishes a new office for service opportunities for Native Americans.

Strengthens Disaster Relief Service Efforts

- Expands the focus of the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) to include disaster relief, infrastructure improvement, environmental and energy conservation, and urban and rural development.
- Encourages service partnerships with other federal agencies and increases the participation of disadvantaged youth to 50 percent of program participants by 2011.

Establishes an Alumni Reserve to Respond in Emergencies

- Establishes an alumni corps of former participants who can be called to service during times of disaster and other emergencies.

Bolsters America's Competitiveness

- Encourages scientists, technicians and mathematicians to participate in service programs to help keep our nation competitive.

Expands Service Opportunities for Older Americans and Public-Private Partnerships

- Creates two new fellowships to engage social entrepreneurs, boomers and retirees, the private sector and Americans from all generations into service. Older Americans will be allowed

to transfer their awards to a child, foster child or grandchild to help them pay for college.

- ServeAmerica Fellowships: ServeAmerica Fellows are individuals who propose their own plans for serving in their communities to address national needs and are matched up with a service sponsor.
- Silver Scholarships and Encore Fellowships: These programs offer Americans, age 55 or older, post-career service opportunities as well as entrance into new careers in the public or nonprofit sector. Silver Scholars will be able to earn up to \$1,000 in exchange for 350 hours of service.

Creates a nationwide community-based infrastructure to leverage investments in service

- Builds a nationwide service infrastructure through community-building investments, social entrepreneurship, and programs to support and generate new volunteers.
- Community Solutions Fund: Creates a Community Solutions Fund pilot program that awards competitive matching grants to social entrepreneur venture funds in order to provide community organizations with the resources to replicate or expand proven solutions to community challenges, including a new focus on leveraging public private partnerships in small communities and rural areas. (Examples of service organizations that were launched by social entrepreneurs include Teach for America, City Year, Citizen Schools, Jump Start, Working Today, an organization that provides affordable, portable health benefits to 100,000 Americans, and the SEED school, the nation's first public urban boarding school.)
- Volunteer Generation Fund: Provides grants to improve the quality and capacity of organizations to work with volunteers, and to create innovations in volunteerism in the areas of recruitment, training and management.

Encourages Highly Skilled Professionals to Help Improve Global Health

- Expands the Volunteers for Prosperity program which encourages highly skilled professionals to serve internationally in targeted areas of need such as global health

Establishes Call to Service Campaigns

- Includes a Call to Service Campaign to launch a national campaign encouraging all Americans to engage in service and to observe September 11th as a National Day of Service and Remembrance

Recognizes and Supports Colleges and Universities Engaged in Service

- Establishes the Campuses of Service to support and recognize institutions of higher education with exemplary service-learning programs and assists students in the pursuit of public service careers.